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appearances under the lens with the rigid candor of ordinary photography. Of the selection of objects it is impossible to judge from a few numbers. The text is a slightly amplified description of the plates. The work will be a luxury to those who are not practiced in the use of the microscope, and a convenience, as an excellent memorandum, to those who are.

VOLATILIZED GOLD. — Mr. John Hewston, Jr., of San Francisco, Cal., has prepared beautiful mounts of gold obtained from the condensing chambers connected with the smelting furnaces. The gold is in the state of brilliant globules of pure metal, and suggests the loss that must be continually taking place during the smelting process.

DIATOMS AS FERTILIZERS. — The miserable attempt to establish the presence of diatoms in the tissues of plants and their consequent (?) importance to the plants as food, which inadvertently was printed in the *American Journal of Science and Arts* for June, 1876, seems not to have been intended as a hoax, after all. It looked like such a capital burlesque upon the follies of scientific puffing of commercial articles that it was almost impossible to consider it as intended for anything else. It has been exposed sufficiently long, however, notably in the *American Journal of Microscopy*, to give ample time for its real design to come out, and in absence of proof to the contrary it must be regarded as one of the most preposterous advertising tricks of the day. In the face of its absurdities it is hardly worth while seriously to discuss the still doubtful value of infusorial earths as fertilizers, or their probably injurious effects upon some kinds of soil.

EXCHANGES. — Julien Deby, C. E., of Brussels, is engaged in studying the fossil diatoms of Belgium, and would be glad to exchange Belgian material of this class for specimens from American deposits. Also, correspondence desired in regard to exchange of microscopical specimens and publications. Mr. Deby may be addressed, care of the editor of this department, 53 Fourth Street, Troy, N. Y.

Slides of gold-bearing quartz from California, for good mounted objects; polarizing preferred. S. R. Hatch, Milford, Mass.

SCIENTIFIC NEWS.

— So alarming and wide-spread have been the ravages of the locusts in the trans-Mississippi States and Territories, during the last few years, that there is a general demand by the people for united state and national action in investigating the habits and devising means for staying the ravages of the migratory locust of the West. To this end, and in accordance with a call issued a few weeks ago by Governor Pillsbury, of Minnesota, a meeting of the governors of the Western States and Territories took place in Omaha, Nebraska, October 25th, to devise means to rid the country of the grasshopper pests. The States were represented

as follows: Nebraska, Governor Silas Garber, ex-Governor Furnas, Professor Wilbur, and Prof. A. D. Williams; Dakota, Governor John L. Pennington; Minnesota, Governor Pillsbury, Professor Whitman, and Mr. Pennock Pusey; Iowa, Governor Kirkwood; Illinois, Prof. C. W. Thomas of Carbondale, Governor Beveridge being ill; Missouri, Governor Hardin and Prof. C. V. Riley.

The meeting was organized by the election of Governor Pillsbury as chairman, and Professor Riley and Mr. Pusey as secretaries.

The Governor of Minnesota made a brief address on the objects of the meeting, and suggested that steps be taken to memorialize Congress to appoint a commission of scientific men to visit the districts suffering from the grasshopper pest, and investigate the subject.

This brought out a discussion which was participated in by nearly all the gentlemen present, the most important speeches being made by Governor Pennington of Dakota, Professor Riley of Missouri, Governor Kirkwood of Iowa, Professor Thomas of Illinois, and ex-Governor Furnas of Nebraska.

Prof. C. V. Riley briefly narrated the habits and history of the pest, and gave sound practical advice. He considered that there were two main questions before the conference: first, the consideration of how best to deal with the young insects that threaten to hatch out over a vast extent of the country next spring, and second, the investigation of the insect in its native home, with a view of preventing its migrations into the country to the southeast. For the first, he advised some well-digested plan of action that would give confidence to the people and insure concert of action; mentioning, among other things, the offering of rewards by the several States and counties for the eggs and newly hatched hoppers, as recommended in his last report, and systematic burning and ditching. For the second, he urged an appeal to Congress to add a special appropriation to the sundry civil service bill, to defray the expenses of a commission of three experts, to be appointed by and to work under Prof. F. V. Hayden, in charge of the United States Geological Survey of the Territories, who, with his experience and skill in organization, could materially assist such a commission. In the evening the conference met again and, after deliberating, appointed a committee of six, composed of the chairman, Messrs. Riley, Osborn, Wilbur, Thomas, and Williams, to present a series of resolutions and suggestions for the farmers of the country, and a memorial to Congress for discussion and adoption.

— Count Gaston de Saporta, the distinguished French botanical palæontologist, has recently been appointed to a professorship in the Jardin des Plantes in Brongniart's place.

— Mr. S. E. Cassino, Naturalists' Agency, Salem, Mass., announces the publication in December of *The Land-Birds and Game-Birds of New England*, by H. D. Minot, 8vo, 400 pages; and in January of a *Naturalist Directory*, which we are sure will prove very serviceable and timely.

— Under date of September 29th, Prof. O. A. Derby, of the Brazilian

Geological Commission under Prof. Ch. Fred. Hartt, writes that he (Derby), H. H. Smith, and Senhor Freitas have discovered one thousand feet of Devonian beds below the Eréré beds discovered in 1870 by Smith and himself. Of this, several hundred feet are Oriskany sandstone, rich in fossils of Devonian aspect, including North American characteristic species. Carboniferous beds occur in the same region, and they now have a complete section from the base of the Devonian to recent formations, in the lower Amazonian valley.

— At the meeting of the National Academy of Sciences, held in Philadelphia, October 17–19, 1876, the following gentlemen were elected members: G. F. Barker, J. A. Allen, W. M. Gabb, E. S. Morse, and John Newton. The following papers on natural science were read: The Results of an Investigation upon the Transformations of *Planorbis multiformis*, by Alpheus Hyatt; On the Geological Structure and Topographical Aspects of the Catskill Mountains, by James Hall; On the Physical Structure and Altitudes of the Southern Groups of the Catskill Mountains, by Arnold Guyot.

— The forty-sixth annual session of the British Association for the Advancement of Science was opened September 6th at Glasgow, by the address of the president, Professor Andrews. Prof. J. Young delivered the opening address before the geological section, Alfred R. Wallace that in the section of biology, Prof. Alfred Newton that in the department of zoölogy and botany of the section of biology, and Capt. F. J. Evans that in the section of geography. Section A, mathematical and physical science, was presided over by Sir William Thompson, who made some flattering allusions to the present condition of American physical science.

— The French Association for the Advancement of Science held its meeting in August, under the presidency of M. Dumas.

— On September 12th the geographical congress convened by the King of Belgium met at Brussels, under the presidency of his majesty.

— As regards *Bathybius*, which is now again attracting notice, more however in clerical than in scientific circles, it may be said that while Professors Wyville Thompson and Huxley have been inclined to doubt whether this is an organism, Dr. Bessels, of the Polaris expedition, discovered in Smith's Sound a form almost exactly like *Bathybius*, which, however, he judged to be still simpler than *Bathybius* and accordingly named *Protobathybius*. A description and a figure of it are given from drawings and notes furnished by the author in Packard's Life Histories of Animals. Even if *Bathybius* should prove to be inorganic, we have *Protobathybius Robesonii* left, and several allied forms of simple Monera, such as *Protamæba protogenes*, and others, which are simple drop-like masses of protoplasm, even without a nucleus. All these animals or plants, it matters not which, but most probably the former, are placed by Haeckel in his *Monera*, a division of organisms adopted by Huxley in a recent paper.